

Full-Time Public Enemy

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Chapter 21: Chapter Twenty-One: Idol (Part Two)

At the Evening Glow Restaurant, Chen Gu, dressed in his school uniform, entered under the guidance of a waiter. Ossosa, seated lazily at a table, waved at him.

Only after Chen Gu took a seat did Ossosa make the introductions. "This is my wife, Qiao Ayin, and this is my daughter, Isabella."

Chen Gu shook Qiao Ayin's hand politely. When it came to Isabella, his eyes lit up, and he spread his arms enthusiastically. "Come give your uncle a hug!"

"Bugger off!" Ossosa scowled. Isabella, however, warmly embraced Chen Gu. This only fueled Ossosa's irritation, and he tapped the table repeatedly, emphasizing, "She's your niece! She's your niece! You old lecher, watch yourself!"

Isabella was already eighteen, a freshman at a university in Wuzhaoyin City.

The girl had blonde hair, and her eyes, as blue as lake water, resembled two clear gemstones. She had inherited her parents' excellent genes, possessing snow-white skin, striking features, and a tall, slender frame—the epitome of the independent, professional, and beautiful women so admired in this era.

"Listen to yourself," Chen Gu glared at Ossosa. "I was just expressing an uncle's affection. You creepy, old fuddy-duddy."

Isabella snickered. Qiao Ayin, with the refined grace of an educated woman, said, "Chen Gu, Ossosa often speaks of you. He only ever says good things about you to me. Yet, you two start bickering the moment you meet. We women truly can't understand the friendships you men have."

The two ridiculous best friends rolled their eyes at each other.

"He said good things about me?"

"When did I ever speak well of him?"

The mother and daughter couldn't help but laugh out loud.

Ossosa brought his family to meet Chen Gu—it was a meeting forty years overdue, at least in Ossosa's mind.

Chen Gu, an actor by trade, had no trouble playing the role of an uncle who could liven up the atmosphere and entertain his old friend's wife and daughter. Thus, the meal was quite enjoyable. Towards the end, Chen Gu gave Ossosa a subtle hint. Ossosa then had his wife and daughter go to the car first, while he joined Chen Gu outside the restaurant for a cigarette.

"Something up?"

"Yes. Do you know about... Professionals?"

As soon as Chen Gu asked, Ossosa's expression changed. He glanced around warily, pulled Chen Gu into a corner, and asked in a low voice, "Why are you asking about this?"

My apologies, Chen Gu thought, feeling compelled to lie. "I... I might have encountered a Professional."

He concocted a story about going for a run at night and accidentally witnessing a battle where one side possessed power that defied all logic.

"Later, I searched online and found out about Professionals. But most people online believe that so-called Professionals are entirely fictional; such beings can't possibly exist in the real world."

Ossosa thought for a moment and said, "That's classified!"

Seeing the curiosity in Chen Gu's eyes, he added helplessly, "Knowing about it won't do you any good. You might even attract trouble."

Chen Gu's heart skipped a beat. "You really know?"

Ossosa glared. "Who do you think I am? I'm the foremost energy expert on Empire River Star! My research projects have involved some Professionals..."

Suddenly, he clapped a hand over his mouth, glaring at Chen Gu as he muttered, "Almost let that slip."

"Don't dwell on it. Their world is very dangerous. You finally got out. Isn't living a quiet, normal life good enough?"

Chen Gu took a deep breath. "I really want to know!"

Ossosa frowned. "You..." He suddenly grew irritated. "Damn it, just tell me the truth! What the hell is going on?"

On the way over, Chen Gu had prepared various excuses, including the "night run" story. Now that Ossosa wasn't so easily fooled, he offered another explanation. "If you'd seen that kind of power with your own eyes, how could you resist fantasizing about it?"

"The prison I was in, Wuzhaoyin City's Second Prison, held Wei Jiangqi, a Prophet of the True Knowledge Sin..."

Chen Gu was halfway through his sentence when, just as he'd expected, an expression of sudden understanding dawned on Ossosa's face.

"But you were under Soul Imprisonment at the time. How could you have seen Wei Jiangqi use his abilities?" Ossosa asked, then slapped his own forehead. "I asked a stupid question. Wei Jiangqi is a Brain Domain Hacker; as long as you're conscious, he can use his abilities."

So the Prophet, a major thorn in the Confederation's side, is a Professional, Chen Gu mused. Ossosa, completely unguarded around his old friend, had readily spilled the beans.

Chen Gu felt a pang of guilt towards his old friend, but it couldn't be helped. He could only compensate him in other ways in the future—for instance, by helping to look after his daughter.

Ossosa asked with concern, "What did he do to you?"

Chen Gu replied nonchalantly, "He visited my dream once. He didn't do anything, but I always feel uneasy, so I wanted to learn more about Professionals."

Ossosa was taken aback. "He's opened a backdoor into your brain..."

"What?" Chen Gu was completely bewildered.

Ossosa explained, "Brain Domain Hackers should actually be quite easy for you to understand; you're a hacker yourself. They treat human brains as 'meat-puters'—flesh machines. Most of what you can do with a computer, they can do with a human brain."

"However, the Confederation is well-aware of Wei Jiangqi's abilities and has implemented corresponding safeguards. The fact that he could still walk into your dreams and leave a backdoor means his Energy Level must have increased."

"But you don't have to worry. Wei Jiangqi's targets are always high-profile individuals. You were probably just a target of opportunity for him—it's likely everyone in the Second Prison had a backdoor installed by him."

The more Chen Gu listened, the more unsettling it sounded. "What kind of outrageous things are you saying!"

Ossosa also realized how that sounded. Just as a sleazy smile began to form on his lips, he suddenly saw someone, and his expression changed instantly.

Sensing someone approach from behind and noticing Ossosa's uneasy expression, Chen Gu turned around curiously. He saw a tall, thin old man with long, disheveled hair and a scruffy beard. The man exuded a weathered, decadent air and was clad in a studded leather jacket, skinny jeans, and cowboy boots. He was walking towards them, visibly excited.

Chen Gu was stunned, not expecting to meet him here.

The old man, upon seeing Ossosa's expression, seemed a bit embarrassed, but Chen Gu had already opened his arms. "What are you standing there for? Now that you're a big star, are you afraid the paparazzi will snap a picture of you hugging me?"

The old man laughed and cursed, "Bullshit!"

He strode forward and hugged Chen Gu, murmuring, "It's been more than forty years, over forty years..."

Ossosa said coldly, "Gorilla, let go quickly. Let's find a more private place. Chen Gu's right; you don't want to be photographed. It wouldn't be good for you."

The last time they were supposed to have dinner, Gorilla had bailed, offering excuses. Although Ossosa had tried to smooth things over with Chen Gu back then, now, seeing Gorilla in person, Ossosa didn't mince his words.

Anyone could tell Gorilla was a rocker. When he was young, he dreamed of becoming a big star, but among his circle of old friends, the "star" in his dream had somehow morphed into "Gorilla."

Gorilla gave a bitter smile. "You wouldn't believe me no matter what I said. I was in the middle of organizing a performance on an alien planet at the time. How could I have rushed back?"

"Then why didn't you even call Chen Gu?"

"I made several calls, all showing the user as offline! I was quite puzzled. Chen Gu might be a die-hard lecher who'd choose passion over pals and is audaciously bold when it comes to women, but I didn't think he'd be as petty as you."

Chen Gu suddenly realized something. "When exactly did you try to call?"

"Around nine or ten in the morning, or maybe three or four in the afternoon. With my job, I'm usually free around those times."

Chen Gu smiled wryly. "I was in class. The school blocks all communications."

Chapter 22: Chapter Twenty-Two: Idol (Part Three)

Gorilla was astounded. "Class?"

"I've returned to school—it was my dad's dying wish. He hoped I could get into a good university," Chen Gu explained briefly.

Gorilla also remembered Chen Beiliu and couldn't help but feel saddened. He then said, "Let's not just stand here. We should find a place for a few drinks."

"Sorry, no thanks, we just had some," Ossosa still refused to forgive him, then suddenly realized, "How did you know we were here?"

Gorilla seemed reluctant to say, but with Ossosa's piercing gaze on him, he had no choice but to confess, "Qiao Ayin told me."

"What!" Ossosa exploded. "You've been secretly contacting her behind my back!" Unable to contain his anger, he rushed forward to grab Gorilla's neck.

Upon hearing this, Chen Gu's eyes lit up. *There's a story here!* He immediately held Ossosa back. "Don't be rash! Let's find a bar to sit down and talk it out slowly!"

You have the story, I have the booze. Now, let the parties involved in this juicy gossip spill the tea!

Gorilla explained repeatedly, "It's not what you think. We've been completely platonic since you two got married. This time, it was because you wouldn't answer my calls, and I was desperate to see Chen Gu, so I secretly asked her. She told me you'd be here..."

Chen Gu couldn't help blurting out, "Completely platonic after marriage?"

And before marriage?

As expected, Ossosa caught on. With a ROAR, the old fellow lunged forward again, grabbing Gorilla's long hair and yanking it into disarray. Gorilla, looking disheveled, was also getting fired up. "What business was it of yours before the marriage?"

Chen Gu felt a twinge of regret. After some effort, he finally managed to drag the two of them into a nearby bar. Ossosa declared fiercely, "Nobody leaves until this is cleared up today!"

He made a call and had Qiao Ayin come over. Still possessing enough awareness to save face, he let Isabella go back to school first.

Before long, Qiao Ayin arrived, and a vigorous argument ensued. Because the story was so compelling and intriguing, Chen Gu ended up downing an entire bottle of whiskey!

As an actor who often delved into his characters, Chen Gu actually had a very deep understanding of human relations, especially emotional matters. He could tell from the start that despite Ossosa's bluster, when it came to emotions, Qiao Ayin had him wrapped around her little finger.

After much huffing and raging from Ossosa, Qiao Ayin rendered him speechless with just a few words. In the end, he dejectedly followed his wife home.

What was clearly a case of "a wife secretly contacting her ex behind her husband's back," with irrefutable evidence, had somehow turned into "a paranoid husband throwing an unreasonable tantrum."

In Chen Gu's mind, a memory from his original self suddenly surged up: *That scenario... it seemed to be the exact plot of an episode from Valkyrie, the sixteen-part art film series!*

Sweet! His original self sure had some talent. I should look up the actual film later.

With only the two of them left, Gorilla looked at Chen Gu awkwardly. He then decided to let it go, picked up his glass, and took a swig. "Go ahead and laugh if you want to."

Chen Gu indeed burst into hearty laughter.

Gorilla sighed. "Emotionally, I lost to Ossosa. Back then, I... I was too young." He silently downed a large glass.

Chen Gu stopped laughing. He didn't offer consolation; he just drank with him.

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At ten o'clock at night, a girl wearing large sunglasses quietly slipped into the bar. Seeing Gorilla, who was already dead drunk, she said helplessly, "Boss, I waited for you for a full hour, and you're here drinking?"

Gorilla's eyes were hazy. "Oh... it's, it's Man Suling. Come, let me introduce you. This, this is my childhood friend... Chen, Chen Gu."

"Chen Gu, this is... the top star in my company. I'm telling you, and I'm not, not bragging, she's currently ranked, ranked number one among the Four New Jade Maidens..."

Man Suling felt exasperated. "Oh my goodness, how could you get so drunk." Saying that, she shot Chen Gu a reproachful glance from behind her sunglasses, showing no interest in getting to know him. *This guy looks even younger than me; how could he be the old man's childhood friend?*

"Help me get him back to the hotel."

Man Suling didn't discuss it with Chen Gu, her tone implying: *You got him this drunk, so of course, it's your responsibility to get him back.*

Chen Gu didn't argue with the young woman either. Gorilla was his friend, so of course, he should take him back.

Fortunately, their hotel wasn't far. Chen Gu, possessing three times the physical stamina of an average person, hoisted Gorilla onto his shoulder with one hand and carried him to the car. Man Suling drove. Once at the hotel, Chen Gu hauled the man up again.

Neither Man Suling nor Gorilla liked to have bodyguards or assistants around. They usually disguised themselves a bit and often went out alone.

Gorilla was already out of it. When he was tossed onto the bed, he suddenly became slightly lucid and mumbled unclearly, "Man Suling, could you see Chen Gu out for me?"

Then his head lolled to the side, and he fell silent—startling Chen Gu, who hurriedly checked his breathing, relieved to find it steady.

Following her boss's instructions, Man Suling escorted Chen Gu to the hotel entrance, despite his repeated insistence that such courtesy wasn't necessary.

Chen Gu was unaware of Gorilla's current status in the entertainment industry. Ossosa, on the other hand, knew a bit, but why would he ever say anything good about his love rival?

In fact, Gorilla's "Heavenly Dog Records" had extremely strong production capabilities. Although Gorilla himself hadn't become famous, his lyric writing and composing skills were exceptionally profound, and he had single-handedly launched seven or eight singers to stardom.

Among them was one pop king, three A-list singers, and a few others of slightly lesser fame, but all were widely recognized as talented singers, destined to be mainstays in the music scene.

Man Suling was one of the four most promising new-generation female singers, known as the "Four Little Jade Maidens." She was at a crucial point in her career ascent, and a boss capable of writing lyrics and composing music was of immense help to her, so during this period, she would carry out all his instructions to the letter.

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The four members of Darkray had been circling the vicinity of Taikoo Skyscraper for hours. They were Man Suling's most loyal fans, having hopelessly fallen for the singer's spiritually rich voice ever since her debut single, "Thoughtless Night."

Among the four, Mao Yisheng had installed an app a few days ago called "Where's the Star?"—a community-driven app for sharing celebrity sightings. If you bumped into a star on the street, you could immediately upload the info; if you heard news of a star's potential whereabouts, it could be shared instantly.

Today, someone had seen Man Suling near Taikoo Skyscraper and shared this piece of "intelligence."

But it seemed they were fated to miss their idol. They'd been circling the area for ages, often just missing her. As soon as they left, someone else would post on the app: "Haha, just saw Man Suling! My goddess is so elegant!"

By the time they rushed back, another person would share from a spot a few hundred meters away: "Really saw my idol! She's so down-to-earth!" accompanied by a photo of the two of them.

They ran back and forth, always just missing her.

The four vigorous military academy students were on the verge of a meltdown. In the cold depths of the night, they roamed the streets listlessly.

Mao Yisheng suddenly saw a familiar figure at the entrance of the hotel ahead. "Isn't that Chen Gu?"

The other three Darkray members took a look. "It really is."

Then, the four military academy students jolted, a sour ache in their hearts. "That girl... standing next to Chen Gu, coming out of the hotel with him..."

"No mistake! Even with sunglasses, I'd recognize her in an instant! It's my goddess, Man Suling!"

"Damn it! How is this guy coming out of a hotel with our goddess!"

It feels like I've been handed a massive green hat!

"He said... he had plans tonight. Could it have been with Man Suling?"

The four stood in the cold wind, feeling desolate. Even their robust physiques couldn't fend off the chill of that moment.

Chapter 23: Chapter 23 The Worm in the Net

Chen Gu felt quite regretful. It wasn't because of Man Suling, but because he had been on the verge of prying information about Professionals out of Ossosa when the Gorilla interrupted him. Now, he would have to find another opportunity.

He returned to his residence, unaware of the tremendous psychological trauma he had inflicted on the four fawning superfans.

Lying in bed, Chen Gu mused, "Brain Domain Hacker can treat the human brain like a computer and carry out invasions on a technical level... The Prophet Wei Jiangqi of True Knowledge Sin turned out to be a Professional. And right after I was released from prison, people from True Knowledge Sin attacked the prison trying to rescue him, but accidentally killed two Soul Imprisonment offenders. Could there be a connection?"

Groggily, Chen Gu fell asleep. In the morning, he underwent the pre-training for the second phase of Star Battle Instructor, and in the afternoon, he joined the military sports students for high-intensity training. His physical potential was pushed to the extreme, which was why he slept so soundly. However, in another part of the city, four individuals in four separate bedrooms tossed and turned, unable to sleep.

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During the physical skills class the next afternoon, when Chen Gu saw Darkray and his group again, he noticed their gazes were strange—filled with a hint of resentment, yet also with envy and admiration.

When Chen Gu wanted to use a particular piece of equipment, Mao Yisheng, who was exercising on it, immediately yielded. "Great One, please, you first," he said.

"Huh?" Chen Gu was puzzled. Teacher Ouyang witnessed this and nodded with a smile. "These muscle-brained military sports students have finally learned some manners and mutual respect under my guidance."

"I am very pleased!"

When training ended for the day, Chen Gu invited everyone to dinner. He didn't flaunt any newfound wealth—no "Your daddy has a billion" attitude—and simply chose a regular restaurant near the university, a common haunt for student gatherings.

At the dinner table, Darkray and the other three frequently toasted Chen Gu. It wasn't until the end of the meal that their true motive surfaced. Mao Yisheng, rubbing his hands together sheepishly, asked, "Brother Chen, could you possibly... um... help us get a few autographed albums from Man Suling?"

In this era, music was typically purchased and downloaded digitally, but singers still released physical albums for dedicated fans to collect.

Chen Gu was a little puzzled. "How do you know I even know Man Suling?"

Mao Yisheng and the others exchanged glances. Just listen to him! The Great One is so modest! They were seen leaving a hotel together, and he calls it 'just knowing' her? We can't expose the Great One's act; the autographed albums depend on him. Since he's choosing to be discreet, we'll pretend we haven't seen through it.

Mao Yisheng finally said, "We... we saw you at the Hemansway Hotel yesterday."

Chen Gu simply said, "Oh." He figured it wasn't a difficult request; a phone call to the Gorilla should sort it out.

"Alright, leave it to me."

The four were overjoyed. "Thank you, Brother Chen! We'll down three shots each to show our gratitude!"

Chen Gu, on the other hand, felt a bit embarrassed by their enthusiasm and decided to call the Gorilla right then and there. "Get me a few of Man Suling's autographed albums."

"...No, it's not for me; my classmates want them."

"Now? Okay, I'll wait for you for a bit. Tell them to hurry. I'm at Xianwei Residence, behind my old university."

The Gorilla replied, "Alright, alright. Come on over, and I'll treat you. You're such a big shot now, still trying to fleece me?"

"Fine. I'll call Ossosa over too, and Zhao Ji. But definitely no Qiao Ayin, don't even think about it!"

Twenty minutes later, the Gorilla arrived. He still felt somewhat guilty towards Ossosa but was too stubborn to admit it, so he'd asked Chen Gu to help mediate. As a gesture, he had brought a batch of expensive, limited-edition autographed vinyl records.

When these records were presented, Darkray, Mao Yisheng, and the other two were dumbstruck. Among the four, Mao Yisheng came from the wealthiest family; his father

had once considered buying him a car, but it was just an ordinary maglev vehicle priced around fifty thousand Starshields. The others were from more average backgrounds.

A single one of these limited-edition vinyl records cost a staggering thirty thousand Starshields, and that wasn't even factoring in the value of Man Suling's autograph.

"This... this is too valuable! A regular autographed album would have been fine," Mao Yisheng stammered, and the other three clearly didn't dare accept them.

The Gorilla waved his hand dismissively. "They're from my own company. We mark up the price for the public, but they don't actually cost much to produce."

Chen Gu also insisted, practically forcing the records on them. Suddenly, Darkray's eyes widened in recognition. "You're... Gao Mengjiu, the musical genius? You're Man Suling's boss?"

The Gorilla nodded with a smile. At this confirmation, the four students practically jumped out of their seats. They were in the presence of a bona fide music industry legend! These young admirers of the Star Battle Instructor were internally freaking out.

Darkray, thoroughly intimidated, mumbled an excuse and quickly ushered his friends away.

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A little later, Ossosa and Zhao Ji arrived. As soon as Zhao Ji walked in, he boisterously made the Gorilla down nine penalty drinks.

Their revelry continued until eleven o'clock that night. As they were leaving, Chen Gu stopped Ossosa. "You can give me a ride home."

Zhao Ji looked puzzled. "Didn't I arrange a car for you?" Indeed, a car and bodyguards were waiting nearby.

Chen Gu waved dismissively. "I have something to discuss with Ossosa privately."

Zhao Ji was mystified. The Gorilla, however, assumed Chen Gu was about to mediate on his behalf with Ossosa, so he quickly made his exit with Zhao Ji.

The first thing Chen Gu said upon getting into the car was, "So, when are you planning to kick the bucket, old man? When you do, you can entrust your niece to my care..."

The two immediately started roughhousing in the car.

Ossosa really had it rough. Of his three best friends, one lusted after his wife, and another after his daughter... Hmm, what about Zhao Ji then? What was Zhao Ji after?

When they reached Chen Gu's residence, they got out of the car and found a quiet corner. Ossosa then asked in a low voice, "Are you really sure about this? From what I know, the process of becoming a Professional is incredibly dangerous. Even if you succeed, you'll face countless bizarre and terrifying enemies throughout your career..."

Chen Gu nodded. "I've made up my mind."

*He had transmigrated to this world, and it had to be connected to *The Past of Four Hundred People*. To unravel the mysteries of that book, he absolutely had to become a Professional. He couldn't just passively accept his situation, telling himself he'd simply 'arrived.' This was soul transmigration—an event with an infinitesimally small probability and extraordinary difficulty. Why him? If there wasn't some hidden reason, if it was all just a stroke of "damn good luck," Chen Gu wouldn't believe it for a second. Could he be a pawn in the game of some powerful entity? A pawn that could be discarded at any moment? And what about his father in his previous world? Would he ever be able to return and fulfill his filial duties? His father had lost his wife in middle age and now, in his old age, his son. How utterly desolate he must be... Lately, he constantly felt like an insect trapped in fate's web, struggling to break free from its invisible, controlling threads. Becoming a Professional was the first small step toward that freedom.*

Chapter 24: Chapter 24 Mysterious Creature Security Bureau

Ossosa didn't understand why Chen Gu was so resolute, nor did he inquire further. Instead, he shared what he knew with Chen Gu. "There's a special department within the Confederation called the Bureau of Mystic Security—the full name is the Bureau of Mysterious Creature Safety. Most of its members are professionals. They control over fifty percent of the Confederation's generators and supermatter. The quickest way to become a professional is to join the Bureau of Mystic Security. Empire River Star also has a Bureau of Mystic Security, but I have no idea where it is. I just heard that Empire River Star's Bureau doesn't have generators; if you want to become a professional, you probably have to go to another planet."

Having finished speaking, he patted Chen Gu on the shoulder and left.

This was the first time Chen Gu had heard of the "Bureau of Mystic Security." Neither Milna Katerina nor Griffin Wester's memories mentioned it, possibly because the Confederation hadn't established the Bureau during their time.

As Chen Gu was speaking with Ossosa, the bodyguards sent by Zhao Ji faithfully guarded the perimeter. Only after Chen Gu entered his room did they leave—secretly leaving one behind, concealed downstairs to protect him.

However, the bodyguard was somewhat negligent, failing to notice a pair of eyes in the dark hallway of the building across the street, coldly observing Chen Gu's room. Through the window that Griffin had once complained about, one could clearly see everything inside the room.

A moment later, those eyes suddenly blinked vertically and vanished into thin air.

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The next day, when Chen Gu ran into Chen Zili on campus, he found the kid with a swollen, bruised face. *Grandpa's a bit curious*, Chen Gu thought. *Zhao Junzhi isn't out of the hospital yet, so who could have beaten him up this time?*

With a mournful expression, Chen Zili approached. "Liu Shichan asked me to give you a message. She wants to 'do it' with you."

Chen Gu was startled. *Are the girls of this era so bold?* The image of Liu Shichan's enticingly long legs involuntarily surfaced in his mind, and he couldn't help thinking: *This request... might not be impossible to fulfill...*

Pointing to his own bruised eyes, Chen Zili said pitifully, "She did this. That woman's not human! She stormed into the men's bathroom to hit me!"

At that moment, Chen Zili's internal monologue was: *Grandpa, someone has hit me again! It's time for you, the elder one, to take action!*

But Chen Gu tilted his head to look at him and with a wave of his hand, punched Chen Zili's other eye, causing it to swell as well.

"AH—" Chen Zili exclaimed angrily, "What are you doing!"

Chen Gu assessed him again and exhaled. "It didn't look quite symmetrical just now, and I found it odd. Now it's better..."

Chen Zili: "..."

Damn it, am I even your real grandson?

Fuming, he stormed off, but then he suddenly remembered, "My mom's inviting you for dinner at our place tonight. I'll come to pick you up after school."

Chen Gu was startled. *So, the 'ugly daughter-in-law' is finally going to meet the parents-in-law, is that it?*

The news that Chen Gu would have a match with Liu Shichan during the afternoon's combat exchange class spread quickly through the campus.

Even the Lubei dark web, which "has to stick its nose into any mischief," opened a betting pool for this afternoon's match!

Chen Gu winning pays 1 to 1.3.

Liu Shichan winning pays 1 to 0.3.

Bets are only taken in Gold Shields—the virtual currency of the Lubei dark web. Since the dark web can issue as much as it wants, there's no need to calculate anything like the betting pool's balance. The odds are simply there to declare the Lubei dark web's unreserved confidence in Liu Shichan's victory.

And the administrator of Lubei's dark web apparently wasn't satisfied yet. To express his unwavering support for Liu Shichan in a clean and decisive manner, he actually put up a banner on the homepage of the dark web: "Full support for Goddess Liu Liu to beat Chen Gu! Seeking signatures in a big way!"

As long as you sign, you can get a Gold Shield!

Chen Gu was quite puzzled about why Liu Shichan wanted to fight him. During lunch, there was much chattering around him, and only after listening in did he understand: Big Sis Liu had ambitious plans to expand the "Dead Phoenix Gang" into the number one gang of Lubei Middle School. Chen Gu had defeated Zhao Junzhi; by defeating Chen Gu, she would prove the strength of the Dead Phoenix Gang.

Chen Gu felt conflicted. His memories from his past life made him reluctant to raise a hand against a girl, even in the ring.

But come afternoon, during the first physical techniques class, Teachers Zhou and Ouyang actually brought him a brand new set of protective gear.

"Quick, try this on. You'll wear this later. The school's protective gear isn't up to standard; it won't hold up against Liu Shichan's leg techniques."

Chen Gu was exasperated. "Seriously? Do you all have that little faith in me?"

The two teachers chuckled. But after all, Chen Gu was their beloved direct disciple, so Teacher Ouyang offered an explanation: "Your potential is immense, but fighting... isn't just about who's stronger. You still need to hone your techniques. Defeating Zhao Junzhi last time was an accident."

However, the four from Darkray had changed into a new outfit, tying white bands around their heads bearing the words "Brother Chen will win." They were completely bowled over by that signed, limited-edition vinyl record; after all, this was a close friend of their idol, Bo Le!

"Brother Chen, don't fear, to be defeated under the Jade Legs of Liu Liu is an honor in itself!"

"Boss Liu has her girl squad, and you have us, your loyal crew! We may not be as good-looking, but we're strong."

"Even death under the Dominant Flower is a romantic notion!"

"Whoever yells that rubbish slogan again, I'm going to be pissed!"

"Liu Goddess is extremely rich. Maybe she'll just enjoy beating you and won't want to fight anyone else afterward, and you could even marry into her wealthy family because of this..."

Chen Gu almost cursed out loud. *Are you guys here to back me up or not?*

During the second physical techniques class, Chen Gu arrived at the combat classroom. The physical techniques teacher from Class Four was already there, waiting. Still holding a grudge from when Chen Gu had knocked him out with a single punch, he glared at Chen Gu with a gloomy face, eager to see him get thrashed by Liu Shichan.

Liu Shichan also entered, followed by a large group of girls. Although none of them were as devastatingly beautiful as Liu Shichan, they were all good-looking, each scoring at least eighty points.

Chen Gu turned back to look at his "loyal crew." *God, is this a zoo? Gorillas, gibbons, sloths... Good thing this Movie King is here as our visual anchor; otherwise, we'd have been instantly overshadowed!*

Today, many people had come to watch the fight. Chen Gu looked around and saw Chen Zili, shrinking his neck among the crowd.

Chen Gu had originally felt that losing a duel wasn't a big deal. But with so many people watching, *This Movie King can't afford to lose face like this!*

After some thought, Chen Gu went straight to Chen Zili. "Do you have any combat techniques to pass on to me?"

"Huh?"

In this era, various martial arts were immensely popular. Boxing gyms and martial arts dojos had replaced the fitness gyms of Chen Gu's previous life and could be seen everywhere on the streets. But truly sophisticated martial arts were still passed on as secrets, hard to learn without paying a hefty price.

Liu Shichan, for example, practiced the Liu Family's secret "Dragon's Backbone Whip." The key to these secret combat arts was not in the moves, which were obvious at a glance, but in the breathing and the techniques of exerting force. Without a master's verbal and physical guidance, the essence could never be learned.

Chapter 25: Chapter Twenty-Five: Perilous Battle!

Was Chen Gu trying to sharpen his spear right before battle? The surrounding students and teachers shook their heads. Even if he were given a secret manual, what could he do? In such a short time, he could at most learn a few moves, and he might not even memorize them all.

To think of using it against Liu Shichan, who had practiced the "Dragon's Backbone Whip" since childhood, was simply a fool's dream.

And why did he approach Chen Zili so directly? It seemed the two even had a slight conflict before.

But to everyone's surprise, Chen Zili, his face etched with reluctance, handed a secret manual to Chen Gu.

Chen Gu opened it and saw it was a secret military combat manual called "Ancient Martial Nine Forms." Within it, Chen Gu vaguely recognized elements of Bajiquan and Xingyi Quan from his previous life.

Chen Gu had guessed correctly. Chen Zili, as his grandson—or more accurately, as Chen Jixian's son—indeed possessed secret military combat techniques.

Their duel was scheduled as the grand finale, the ultimate highlight of the event. Before that, other students would engage in sparring matches.

Class Nine's morale was severely crushed, while Class Four's spirit soared. Consequently, in the initial matches, Class Nine's students appeared hesitant and constrained, leading to a string of quick defeats.

In this exchange meet of six bouts, Class Nine had already lost all five.

Even students with a slight strength advantage could only perform at seventy or eighty percent of their capacity under such pressure, falling to Class Four students who achieved underdog victories.

The first five bouts concluded in a mere fifteen minutes, with each participant lasting an average of only three minutes.

All of Class Nine's combatants were male, and the five of them were overcome with shame. They often boasted about their stamina, but reality delivered a harsh truth: You guys are just pathetically quick finishers!

Teacher Zhou's face was so grim it looked as if water could be wrung from it. He hadn't been a graduate for long; this was his third year working at Lubei Middle School. Unfortunately, his luck had been poor in the first two years, with the classes he taught consistently ranking last in physical skills. This year... it seemed destined to sink again.

Otherwise, why would Class Four's physical skills teacher mock him to his face for "not being up to par"?

Suddenly, Teacher Zhou grasped at his last straw: his and his martial senior's prize disciple. Last time, it was Chen Gu who had turned the tide, allowing them to hold their heads high.

He whipped his head around to find Chen Gu, just as the girls from Class Nine were also turning to look at him. The girls were certainly not pleased; how could a class full of such "quick finishers" satisfy them?

But the sight stunned everyone. Chen Gu was sitting at the very back, his school uniform completely drenched in sweat.

The students from Class Four noticed too. Their physical skills teacher burst out laughing, "Our dear Chen Gu, surely you're not breaking out in a cold sweat from nervousness, are you? Don't worry, I'll ask Miss Liu to be gentle with you..."

The moment the words left his mouth, the physical skills teacher inwardly regretted them. *Why did that sound like I was helping Chen Gu take advantage of Liu Shichan?*

He cautiously glanced at his student. Liu Shichan, however, looked at him seriously and replied, "I will not."

The other Class Four students also snickered, "Chen Gu, don't be too scared. Big Sister Liu's whip kick will, at most, knock you out for a few dozen minutes."

Chen Gu remained silent. His profuse sweating was certainly not from fear. It was the result of him embodying Griffin Wester through his memories, rapidly grasping the "Ancient Martial Nine Forms" using the techniques of the High-Energy Combat Art.

The High-Energy Combat Art could be combined with any weapon, especially high-tech ones, to maximize the synergistic power of a biological body and said weapon.

But to underestimate this skill simply because of the words "Combat Art" at the end would be truly foolish.

Fundamentally, this skill was a combat art.

This embodiment through memory granted Chen Gu exceptional combat talent and battle experience. However, achieving such comprehension demanded even more effort than when Chen Gu first experimented with the High-Energy Combat Art.

As for Chen Gu possessing the memories of two professionals but, so far, only utilizing Griffin Wester's... *Besides its suitability, what man would willingly pat his own chest for no reason?*

Chen Gu slowly rose, a single sensation overwhelming him: hunger.

Liu Shichan suddenly noticed a change in Chen Gu's gaze as he looked at her. It was a look of raw, intense desire!

Big Sister Liu was, after all, still young and couldn't distinguish between lust and hunger. If she could have had an open discussion with Great Actor Chen, he would have undoubtedly arranged a private session to meticulously explain the performative differences between these two gazes... and what might ensue.

Just as Great Actor Chen had done for those young, aspiring actresses in his previous life.

However, Liu Shichan wasn't particularly surprised. She herself didn't place much importance on looks but was aware of her own attractiveness. She usually didn't mind timid boys sneaking glances at her.

But this direct, unblinking stare made her feel somewhat repulsed.

"HUMPH!" she snorted softly.

Chen Gu had already approached, his mouth parched. He reached out a hand towards her in a way that looked suspiciously like a grope!

Liu Shichan couldn't hold back any longer and lashed out with a kick. But Chen Gu said weakly, "Do you have a high-energy ration in your pocket? Give me a bite."

Liu Shichan froze. She had a touch of the sheltered young lady's naive ditziness and often spoke without thinking. "Do you have a dog's nose, or what? How is it so sharp?"

After completing the first phase of the Star Battle Instructor's preliminary training, Chen Gu's physical constitution was three times that of an ordinary person; naturally, his sense of smell was also three times sharper.

Chen Gu didn't answer, his eyes fixed intently on the breast pocket where she had stashed a high-energy ration.

Liu Shichan pursed her lips, took it out, and handed it to him. It was a palm-sized bar, packed with enough energy to sustain a fully equipped warrior through a day of intense combat.

Chen Gu took it, roughly and wildly tore open the ration's packaging, and devoured it like a ravenous wolf.

Liu Shichan frowned, *How does this guy manage to make even eating look so lewd?*

There was a water dispenser in the combat classroom. Chen Gu rushed over and gulped down half its contents. He was still famished but no longer felt so "weak."

"Ready now?" Class Four's physical skills teacher asked impatiently. Chen Gu walked back, brushed his damp hair back with a hand. The eyes of the girls from both classes instantly lit up. *So handsome!*

Chen Gu cupped his fist towards Liu Shichan. "Ready. Please, proceed."

Teacher Zhou hurriedly produced protective gear. "Put this on..."

"No need."

Liu Shichan's gaze sharpened, her entire demeanor shifting in an instant. With a cry as piercing as icy thunder, she charged.

Neither in the first inter-class combat exchange nor during yesterday's bout with Chen Zili had Liu Shichan actually used her full strength.

The Liu Family's "Dragon's Backbone Whip" was an extremely profound secret technique, its power originating entirely from the spine. Cultivated to its peak, the spine became like a steel whip.

Advancing rapidly, Liu Shichan's long legs moved in a continuous, coiling chain, unleashing a tornado-like flurry of leg shadows!

The moment this technique appeared, Teacher Zhou turned his head, unable to bear watching.

Chen Zili's mouth fell open. *Good heavens, that tigress actually went easy on me with her long legs yesterday!*

Her entourage from Class Four erupted into cheers. Chen Gu's "loyal crew" also wanted to shout their support, but faced with such a terrifying display of legwork, their throats went dry, and they couldn't utter a sound—their eyes were glued to the fight, afraid to miss a single moment.

Students specializing in military fitness often looked down on regular high school students, typically possessing an "I can take on ten of them" kind of confidence. But now, that confidence was utterly shattered by the whirlwind of Liu Shichan's leg shadows.

However, just when everyone thought Chen Gu was about to be swept away in a single onslaught, a series of sharp slaps echoed from the heart of the battle. Chen Gu hadn't retreated a single step. His upper and lower arms formed a ninety-degree angle in a

scientifically sound defensive posture. With only minor parries, he defended his front, incredibly deflecting each of Liu Shichan's kicks to the sides.

The storm of attacks finally subsided. Liu Shichan twisted her slender waist and stepped back, adjusting her breathing.

Yet, one leg remained forward, like an iron stake. If Chen Gu were to press the attack then, she would seize the opportunity to counter.

But no one noticed that Liu Shichan's retreating leg was trembling slightly.

The shock in Liu Shichan's heart far surpassed anyone else's. *Is this guy a monster? How can he be so strong!* Her own barrage of kicks against his arms had sent a jarring force back into her own shins, making them numb!

She had tested her kicking power at home; each strike registered between 800 and 1,000 pounds. She wasn't some delicate girl with flashy but ineffective moves; this was the "Dragon's Backbone Whip."

The entire hall was silent, save for Liu Shichan's long, rhythmic breaths.

Chen Gu stood his ground. He had barely managed to block that last furious assault. Liu Shichan had cultivated her family's secret art for over a decade, while Chen Gu's understanding was the recent result of a "cheat." To have held his own like this was already remarkable.

Chen Gu wasn't avoiding pursuit; instead, he was reflecting on and replaying the recent exchange, deepening his understanding of the "Ancient Martial Nine Forms."

Liu Shichan had recovered. This time, she didn't expect to defeat Chen Gu in a single move. Instead, she began to circle him with unique footwork, launching occasional hit-and-run attacks.

Chen Gu responded conventionally. The duel between them slowly became "mundane," far less dazzling than its explosive start.

But the expressions of the two teachers grew solemn. This was the calm before the storm.

Indeed, after several probing attacks, Liu Shichan had gained a rough measure of Chen Gu's level. Suddenly, she let out another sharp cry. An icy clap of thunder seemed to explode by Chen Gu's ears. Liu Shichan launched an attack from all directions simultaneously, as if she had multiplied into countless versions of herself, all striking at Chen Gu at once.

Feints and real attacks blurred together, illusion and reality intertwined.

This was the pinnacle of Liu Shichan's combat skills. In fact, this was her first time using it in actual combat. When she practiced it alone at home, this technique wasn't always successful; she only managed it about sixty percent of the time.

Today, Chen Gu was a worthy opponent, giving her the chance to unleash her potential.

However, when Chen Gu witnessed this, he visibly relaxed.

If Liu Shichan had fought him head-on with straightforward power, or with a furious barrage like at the beginning, Chen Gu would have struggled, given his fresh grasp of the combat art.

But when Liu Shichan employed such "fancy" techniques, he found them easiest to handle. Griffin Wester possessed a vast reservoir of combat experience, all of which Chen Gu could "borrow."

As a combat master, Chen Gu saw through the feints and true intentions of Liu Shichan's technique in an instant. His initial move, "Immortal Points the Way," executed with fingers extended like a sword, suddenly transformed mid-motion into the "Dragon Claw Hand," lashing out dangerously towards one of the besieging figures.

The moment Chen Gu made his move, Liu Shichan inwardly cried out in alarm. *How could he so easily see through my ultimate technique?*

She retreated in a panic, but Chen Gu, with physical attributes triple that of an ordinary person, was far from average. With a RIP— Liu Shichan stumbled back, the white sock on her left calf torn open by Chen Gu's grab.